CITY HALL 22500 Salamo Rd. West Linn Oregon 97068 telephone: (503) 657 0331 fax: (503) 650 9041

CITY OF
West Linn

February 3, 2009

Chris Deffebach
Long Range Planning Manager
Metro
600 NE Grand Avenue
Portland, OR 97232

RE: **City of West Linn Local Community Growth Aspirations Report for Metro**

Dear Ms. Deffebach:

The City of West Linn is pleased to provide this response to your request for *"Local Community Growth Aspirations"*, as outlined in your November 24, 2008 Memorandum to the City. The City strongly supports the regional government's recent efforts to include local community aspirations into their larger *"Making the Greatest Places"* effort and looks forward to continuing to collaborate with Metro on the upcoming Urban Growth Report and Urban/Rural Reserves initiative. The City of West Linn is particularly supportive of Metro's regional efforts to preserve natural areas, promote more sustainable development practices, increase transit options to the greatest number of people, and preserving and enhancing existing neighborhoods to create more vibrant communities where people can choose to walk for pleasure and to meet their everyday needs.

This letter provides you with the specific responses in accordance with the *"Local Aspirations for Growth Reporting Sample Format"* that you provided to each City. Additional issues related to the City's long-term growth aspirations/expectations of the City are also included and should be considered within the context of the future growth potential within the City of West Linn.

In determining our responses to your request, City Staff utilized our existing Comprehensive Plan, existing master plans, neighborhood plans, citizen attitude surveys, Residential Unit and Buildable Lands Report, as well as our adopted Vision document ("Imagine West Linn") and it must be considered within this specific framework. There was no additional public process utilized in crafting this document. This is due to the limited amount of time allotted to prepare this response; and as was specifically requested in your November 24th, 2008 letter initiating the process. Staff did encourage and receive additional feedback directly from our City Council and Planning Commission. Please note that both our Council and Commission expressed apprehension about enunciating the City's growth aspirations, arguably the most important long-term issue facing the City, without completing a substantial public process. It is our intent to continue to evaluate many of these complex and evolving issues and provide feedback to Metro as adjustments outlined herein change.

Growth Aspirations

The long-range growth vision for the City is primarily outlined in our "Imagine West Linn" vision document and within the Goals and Policies of our Comprehensive Plan. The existing development is essentially 'built-out' in the form of a suburban, single-family residential community. Due to

physical attributes and existing development patterns any significant growth within the City limits would result in considerable disruption of the existing preferred character of the City.

Aside from an acknowledgement that the existing paper mill property along the waterfront may ultimately redevelop in the long-term, the City has not identified any significant areas for redevelopment or expected growth. There is broad consensus that the City's existing land use pattern is satisfactory and there is little City-wide support for the expansion of, or intensification of, any areas (residential, commercial, or industrial) within the City. It is generally preferred, and the City's planning documents support, that limited residential infill and the redevelopment of commercial areas will occur, but should be in accordance with our existing Plan and Code provisions.

The greatest growth challenge for our City is to balance our desire to progressively enhance and improve the existing, valued, characteristics of our community while simultaneously addressing the pressures of an increasing population, ensuring property right protections, and the economic ramifications of our growth choices. Metro can most effectively assist the City in achieving our goals by recognizing the unique aspects of our community into its long-term regional planning mission and by continuing to provide us with the tools and support that we need to meet our needs (e.g. increased access to funding opportunities, best management practices, statistical data and mapping support, etc.).

The City is scheduled to undergo its Periodic Review in 2011, which will allow us access to resources to complete an in-depth analysis of our population, housing, and employment needs. This will likely result in a more detailed review of the expectations and aspirations for the City at that time. We look forward to working with Metro and the State to help us 'fine-tune' our growth aspirations in the near future.

Population expectations

It is important to note that the City of West Linn is approaching its ultimate build-out limitations and at the current time there are no expectations to expand our boundaries beyond the existing UGB. The City maintains, and annually updates, a Residential Units and Buildable Lands Report which estimates that, within the existing UGB, the City could theoretically attain a maximum population of 30,436 people by the year 2030. It assumes the maximum number of potential dwelling units that could be built under the existing zoning in the City, with an exception for lands with obvious environmental constraints. This population number can be considered a 'maximum capacity' figure; it theorizes that all possible future residential units occurring that *could* potentially be built in the City, actually *will* be built. These units principally come from the development of vacant buildable lands, infill development, and the construction of accessory units. Our infrastructure Master Plans utilize the 'maximum capacity' number figure, at the time of their completion, to assure that we are adequately prepared for the most impactful alternative.

Using the latest City updated Report, the City's current population is estimated to be 24,771 (which compares to the official certified population estimate of 24,400 made by Portland State's University). Under the existing zoning designations in the City, this additional potential maximum population of the City (5,665 people) could be accommodated within the existing UGB, assuming no additional up-zonings in the City. However, as a practical matter, and more important in terms to our current aspirations, a better estimate of the number of people that are *likely* (or that can be

reasonably expected) to be added to the City by the year 2030 would be within a range of 10%-30% of the theoretical maximum. This would result in the likely addition of approximately 566 to 1,700 new residents by the year 2030. The total population of the City at build-out would be in the range of 25,337 to 26,471 people. This assumption is based on the fact that over time, the remaining undeveloped and underdeveloped properties in the City tend to have other factors or restrictions preventing their maximum development potential (or making it cost prohibitive to proceed). These factors include, land valuations, unique environmental constraints, neighborhood opposition, site configuration, etc.

Assuming residential development at 10% (low end) and 30% (high end) of the theoretical maximum, as described above, will result in a compounded annual growth rate between 0.11% to 0.32% by the year 2030 is expected. In terms of new residential units per year, this assumption results in an average of 10 (low end) to 33 (high end) new dwelling units (2.4 persons per household) added annually to the City over the next 21 years.

Employment Areas

West Linn predominantly consists of low density single-family residential neighborhoods. We are a generally a suburban bedroom community. The City's largest private employer is the West Linn Paper Company (mill site) which has not shown an indication of either expanding, or reducing its operations in the near future. The existing commercial areas in the City are very important and continued efforts should be made to ensure that they continue to survive and evolve to meet the needs of the community. In addition to our Cascade Commercial Center located at Salamo Road and Parker Road, we have two town centers which are identified on Metro's 2040 Growth Map – the Willamette Old Town incorporating the nearby surrounding 10th Street commercial areas, and the Bolton neighborhood's Central Village and nearby highway corridor areas. We may also seek acknowledgment of our Robinwood commercial area as a Mainstreet, as defined by Metro.

The City is not anticipating expanding these areas in any significant way. However, the City is focused on ensuring that all of our commercial centers remain successful. The city is currently working with the State and Clackamas County to pursue the possibilities under the State's *Main Street* program for our Willamette Historic and the Robinwood commercial areas. The City has also made changes to its Code to permit limited mixed use development within these commercial areas. West Linn has a large number of home-based businesses, which constitute a significant employment base and provides an alternative employment opportunity for our residents. Additionally, the City has a significant number of 'teleworkers' who work from their homes, which has proven to be an effective way to reduce traffic congestion and decrease air pollution.

Broadly speaking, the City has no expectations to expand beyond our existing UGB or increase our existing capacities significantly. It is expected that our growth will be in accordance with our current land use and zoning designations. Annexations in the City of West Linn require a majority vote in a City-wide election. . We do anticipate the eventual annexation and development or partial preservation of the unincorporated areas within our UGB which have not yet been annexed. However, future annexations that would expand the City's boundaries outward would likely receive less support.

Important Specific Considerations

Our City Council identified the following issues as being of particular importance to the City of West Linn when considering the future growth expectations for our City and region as a whole:

- All future growth considerations must consider the existing quality of life that the resident's currently enjoy. The City has not expressed any plans to expand our City boundaries beyond the current UGB. The future of the Stafford area is of keen interest to the residents of the City. Considering its location and the impact its future development will have on this community, the City has expressed a desire to have the area be designated 'Rural Reserve'.

- Any future redevelopment of the area around the mill site must be sensitive to the historic value of the existing buildings . The City is currently pursuing a National Heritage Area designation of this area.

- The City is eager to explore additional transit opportunities, particularly high-capacity transit, in the area. These include increased bus routes and headways, additional park and ride locations, extension of the streetcar to the north, greater connections to the surrounding commercial and employment areas (Beaverton, Tualatin, etc.) via a high capacity transit corridor along I-205, utilizing Rosemont Rd. as a connection, and/or potential water taxi service to Portland on the Willamette River.

- Future growth expectations will likely be limited due to the City's desire to protect and expand our natural and environmentally sensitive areas. As more land area is preserved and development is restricted, the City's ability to increase population capacity or employment areas will be further limited.

- Improvements to the 10th Street/I-205 interchange are a priority and must be included in any growth related discussions that would further adversely impact its capacity. City residents have consistently expressed concern about the need for a solution to the traffic on I-205 and the accompanying negative impacts of that traffic on City streets and our neighborhoods.

- Completing the planned improvements along OR 43, as envisioned in the City's "Highway 43 Conceptual Design Plan", are a priority for the City. Any future growth related actions that impact this roadway must be done in accordance with this approved Plan.

- Owing to our existing development pattern, the City strongly supports Title 12 of Metro's Urban Growth Management Plan that includes policies to protect and respect existing residential neighborhoods from the adverse impacts of growth.

- The City has been actively including more sustainable measures into our everyday practices. These have included an adopted Sustainability Plan, new Comprehensive Plan Policies, creation of a standing Sustainability Advisory Committee, and the inclusion of sustainable practices into our engineering and development regulations. Future regional growth considerations should include specific performance measures that ensure long-term sustainability for local communities as well as the region as a whole.

We look forward to working with Metro on this important project.

Sincerely,

Bryan Brown
Planning Director

cc: Chris Jordan, City Manager, City of West Linn
Doug McClain, Planning Director, Clackamas County

generalp/letters2009/Metro aspirations ltr – final 2-3-09